



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **COUNTY WORKER SHARES DRAMATIC STORY AS HE FIGHTS WEST NILE VIRUS** *Public Information Officer is One of Three New Patients; Cases Expected to Rise*

What started as a rash after a day of yard work quickly turned into a medical emergency. A County of San Diego Public Information Officer now finds himself at the center of a news story after being diagnosed with West Nile virus.

"I thought I had done everything I could to protect myself – made sure I didn't have standing water around my property, kept my pool clean. But I still got the virus, and trust me, you do not want this to happen to you," warns Bill Polick, who is the Public Information Officer for the County Department of Public Works.

His ordeal started late last month. The 62-year-old was cutting down a tree in his backyard and woke up the next day with a rash, which quickly progressed to severe flu-like symptoms and a trip to the hospital. Although he doesn't remember most of his hospital stay, doctors did a battery of tests, finally diagnosing Polick with West Nile virus. Since there is no treatment, Polick is recovering slowly and has already lost 30 pounds.

He is one of three new human cases announced by County Health and Human Services Agency this week, along with one sentinel chicken and 14 birds that tested positive for the virus.

"Mr. Polick's experience illustrates why we continue to issue warnings about West Nile virus," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "The public needs to know that it is a serious risk, and they must protect themselves. Until temperatures cool off for a significant amount of time, we will likely see cases rise."

The attached fact sheet has information about how to prevent and detect West Nile virus. You can also find more information at [www.SDFighttheBite.com](http://www.SDFighttheBite.com).

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Bill Polick is available for media interviews Tuesday, October 21 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at his home in Tierrasanta. Please contact Tammy Glenn at 619-890-0778. County health officials are also available at the numbers on the attached fact sheet.**

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